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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: H1N1 FLU CASES IN UAE

11. Summary: UAE Arabic and English newspapers straightforwardly reported on H1N1 flu cases in the UAE involving individuals coming to the UAE from abroad, in particular students coming from the U.S. The general tone assured that the health authorities were able to contain these cases, mitigating any threat by implementing global standards, and quarantining UAE students coming from the U.S. who are suspected to have the H1N1 flu. The UAE chief editor of Dubai-based Arabic tabloid daily "Emarat Al-Youm" rejected the "exaggerated" global response to the H1N1 flu, reasoning that it is curable and not fatal. End summary.

12. Headlines:

-- Dubai-based English daily "Gulf News" (circulation 95,000), front-page headline on 06/18: "Students told to get in touch with UAE authorities over swine flu fears"

-- Abu Dhabi-based English daily "The National" (circulation 60,000), headline on 06/19: "Two new swine flu cases in UAE [from the U.S.]"

-- Abu Dhabi-based Arabic semi-official daily "Al-Ittihad" (circulation 65,000), headline on 06/19: "High Commission to meet on Sunday to discuss swine flu; Distribution of 50,000 swine flu awareness releases in Dubai"

-- Abu Dhabi-based Arabic semi-official daily "Al-Ittihad" (circulation 65,000), headline on 06/20: "UAE citizens returning home inflicted with swine flu; Swine flu vaccines to reach UAE by end of September"

-- Dubai-based English daily "Gulf News" (circulation 95,000), front-page headline on 06/20: "Fifth swine flu case in UAE: Expat tests positive"

-- Dubai-based English daily Khaleej Times (circulation 60,000), front-page headline on 06/20: "UAE Citizens in U.S. Safe from Swine Flu, Says UAE Embassy"

13. Abu Dhabi-based English daily "The National" (circulation 60,000), headline on 06/19: "Two new swine flu cases in UAE [from the U.S.]"

"Two new cases of swine flu were confirmed in the UAE yesterday, bringing the total to four. The two infected people, both Emiratis,

had returned from abroad and were found to be carrying the H1N1 virus, according to the state news agency WAM. The Ministry of Health said both were in a stable condition and receiving treatment.

There were no details of how the infection was discovered. Another UAE national who was confirmed four days ago as having tested positive for swine flu has completely recovered and has left hospital, the ministry said. The Emirati man had flown into the country from the U.S. The UAE's first recorded case was last month when a man who had visited Canada returned to the country carrying the virus. The man, who works as an academic at UAE University in Al Ain, presented himself to hospital with flu-like symptoms. He was given medication and told to remain at home. He is now said to have made a full recovery. Yesterday's announcement follows the World Health Organization's decision to classify the swine flu outbreak as a worldwide pandemic. The Ministry of Health immediately announced it was reviewing screening measures at all airports monitoring passengers arriving for swine flu. Thermal-imaging cameras that can detect fever in people arriving into the country are at Abu Dhabi and Dubai International Airports. A radio and TV campaign offering information on the virus has also been launched.

The ministry said in yesterday's statement on WAM that swine flu infections occur and urged people not to panic and deal with cases calmly. People are also urged to report any suspected cases to health authorities. Enough medication, the drug Tamiflu, has been stockpiled by the UAE to cover the whole population, the ministry reiterated."

14. Under the headline "Students told to get in touch with UAE authorities over swine flu fears," Dubai-based English daily "Gulf

ABU DHABI 00000633 002 OF 002

News" (circulation 95,000) on 06/18 released following article:

"Abu Dhabi: Students studying abroad have been asked to call emergency numbers and notify UAE authorities should they suspect they have symptoms of swine flu. 'We have provided UAE embassies and cultural attaches around the world with emergency contact numbers and email addresses to make it easy for the students to record any cases,' an official said. Gulf News on Tuesday reported that Emirati students abroad planning to return home for the summer holidays will be quarantined should they show symptoms of swine flu.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research on Thursday said expatriate students will also be monitored. The ministry has already started follow up procedures to check Emirati and expatriate students.

'The ministry has contacted the UAE embassies in the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Europe to get details about the students, both Emirati and expatriates and follow affected cases,' a ministry official told Gulf News.

'There are about 1,950 Emirati students studying under scholarships with the Ministry, and the number of UAE students outside the UAE is more than 2,000, but we don't have the number of expatriate students.'

UAE embassies in the U.S. and Canada have also issued circulars, warning students that Ohio, California, New York, Kansas City and Texas have been affected by swine flu.

It is encouraging Emiratis abroad to remain in contact with those who are responsible for them or if they do not have anyone, to contact the embassy.

They have been urged to remain indoors in dormitories or residences and to avoid travelling to areas that have swine flu.

Meanwhile, the Abu Dhabi International Airport is stepping up precautionary measures against flu as the number of cases reported in the region is on the upswing.

'We are facilitating the establishment of mobile health clinics at the airport,' an Abu Dhabi Airports Company (ADAC) official told Gulf News.

ADAC, being the airport operator, has overseen the deployment of high-tech thermal-imaging cameras and mobile detecting devices. Five imaging cameras have been deployed at Abu Dhabi airport and one at both Al Ain International and Al Bateen Executive Airport."

15. Under the headline "H1N1 exaggeration," Sami Al-Reyami, UAE Chief Editor, wrote an op-ed on 06/21 in Dubai-based Arabic tabloid daily "Emarat Al-Youm" (circulation 20,000):

"Why is there all of this exaggeration about the swine flu? Yes it is true that it can quickly spread and move from one person to another. But, as a UAE medical student in the U.S. said in an email she wrote to me, it does not kill you if you have good health. There is no reason to panic. This fact is something the UAE Ministry of Health should stress and explain. We cannot blame the Ministry of Health because it is simply applying the same precautions and measures that the rest of the world is taking. If they didn't do that, officials in the ministry could make some people here upset and might even be accused of taking an indifferent stance. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, but that doesn't mean that swine flu is invincible. It also doesn't mean it is worse than cancer or AIDs. Maybe after several years, we will figure out the real reason behind the world's exaggerated response to H1N1."

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